

2005 CSP Rewarding the Best...Motivating the Rest

Their Story

Eleven years ago, looking for land to run a cattle operation in the high plains of northeastern Colorado, Colby Van Cleave found a place tucked away in the wind-swept, drought-prone Pawnee Creek watershed just south of the Nebraska border. It definitely was not love-at-first-sight. After checking out the drought-damaged, over-grazed, cactus-covered pastures Colby was ready to drive away and look somewhere else. "I saw there was a good calving area on the property," said Colby, "the location was good, and the house was nice."

Colby applied his passion for ranching to his new operation by working with NRCS to set up two grazing management plans to accommodate a high-intensity, short-duration system, splitting his herd of just under 300 Angus Mix cows into two rotational patterns, allowing all of his fifteen pastures to rest for a minimum of forty days.

Today, Colby and his wife Sandy are recognized as outstanding stewards of the land, qualifying for a top tier CSP stewardship award on more than six thousand acres of restored, healthy rangeland.



Colby Van Cleave (right); NRCS Conservationist Jon Wicke (left).

"Improving my grass, increasing my grass, is giving me more beef. I can't believe there aren't more ranchers in CSP, it's a great program."

Colby Van Cleave

About CSP

- ◆ The majority of your privately owned property or tribal land must be within one of the Colorado identified CSP watersheds to be eligible for 2006 CSP funding.
- ◆ However, each year, for the next eight years, new watersheds will be identified for further opportunities for enrollment into the program.
- ◆ CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands.
- ◆ The program provides payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources.
- ◆ CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of natural resource conservation on their operations.
- ◆ CSP also creates incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance. In short, CSP rewards the best and motivates the rest.